

3/24/15

Week 13: Mission: Rescue Life
Mark Batterson: *The Grave Robber*

James: Thank you all very much. Appreciate it! Welcome to *LIFE Today*.

I'm James Robison; my wife, Betty and I are so grateful to have Mark Batterson here with us. He wrote *The Circle Maker*. And wrote another interesting one about being somewhere in a snowy pit with a lion, I think. But he's also got another one called *The Grave Robber*. He is a tremendous blessing.

I want to encourage you to check STREAM.org. Can you remember that? Pretty simple: stream (like a river) .org? It's a web site where we're streaming love and truth and life continually to give you understanding of the times; that we not perish for lack of knowledge of the truth that sets us free and keeps us free. Without personal freedom we lose national freedom, and we really do need an awakening so go there.

Mark Batterson is a gifted writer. When I began to read this book I wasn't too far into it before I knew I was reading a very gifted writer. I also knew I was reading someone very insightful. I felt like I was reading someone who was really committed to the call of God on his life. So I wanted to talk to him. So even before I got maybe more than halfway through the book I was trying to talk to him. He was polite enough to talk to me.

[Laughter]

I found out that he was very serious about what he was called to do when you pastor in Washington, D.C. I think it is called the National Community Church in Washington. When you're there, you're there by divine assignment; you're not there for kicks. He's on an assignment. I really believe that he's a treasure. So we're going to

talk to him. We're going to talk about his books, *The Grave Robber*, which I'll show you how it impacted me already. Would you welcome Mark Batterson to *LIFE Today*?
Mark -- hey buddy!

Mark: Thank you!

James: Well, you can tell when I talked to you that I was excited about the book, and about you. Tell us, you had the book, *Circle Maker* and did it surprise you how well that just took off?

Mark: It did! I didn't know if another book on prayer was needed, per se, but I really felt like God gave me a message, and a message to call us back to our knees. Then to see how the Lord used that book and the stories of people who are circling, members of congress are circling the capitol and a lot of folks just...

James: Increase their number, Lord. That's important that they're doing that. Because you know one of the things that you don't see a lot when we talk about all the crisis, you don't hear, at least on the news, it may be that they totally ignore it, you don't hear many calls to prayer. Like you know, even Benjamin Franklin did that at a time when it looked like everything would fall apart; we need to fall back on our face. Frankly, I believe you're trying to inspire that and it thrills me to hear you say that some of the people are actually really circling and praying for the power of God to fall.

Mark: Well, we're believing for revival and I think it would be wonderful if it started in the nation's capitol.

James: Yes, it would!

Mark: So whether it starts with us or someone else...

[Applause]

Yeah!

James: But if we ever have a real one it certainly needs to reach the capitol.

Mark: It does! It does. And we live one mile from the capitol. And of course, our seven campuses are right there in that vicinity.

James: You're surrounding them. You're circling them!

Mark: We are! We're trying! We're trying!

James: Let's talk about *The Grave Robber*. I don't know if the cameras can get in here close enough but you can just get an example here. I don't know if you can zero in on this, but this is typical -- can you get close to see how I mark all this up? That's not just one example, it is virtually every page in here. By the way, I read a lot of books. I'll go many pages, a whole chapter and never mark anything. Usually, I quit reading the book.

[Laughter]

But when I'm into it -- it is absolutely phenomenal! We talk about you said we reduce people to labels. That's what they've done in congress. That's what we do in the sectarian divide. That's what we do with our tribalism. We put a label on them. We think if we label them we nullify their effect and we'll keep our people away from them even though we may be staying away from Jesus.

But you said: "Our culture has a tendency to reduce people to labels. Not only is that unhealthy, it is unholy. It is also dehumanizing."

You're good with words! "Don't let anyone label you beside the one who made you. Take your cues from scripture. You are more than a conqueror. You're the apple of God's eye. You're sought after. You're a joint heir with Christ, a child of God."

And I wrote out here: "Ambassadors, overcomers, priests and kings."

I'm going to help you with your word power, Mark!

Mark: I love it! I love it!

James: See, we get over here and we actually see who God says we are. Tell me about *The Grave Robber* because you talk about miracles. You started with using H₂O, something as ordinary as water and turning it into wine. And you end up also talking about the resurrection of Lazarus, but you talk about a lot of miracles. So tell me where you were headed when you said "I'm on a journey."

Mark: Well, I think the starting place is there are miracles all around us all the time and we take those for granted.

Betty: That's what Betty saw right off. She said that to me today!

Mark: Yeah, we're on a planet that is spinning at 1,000 miles an hour; we'll make one full rotation every 24 hours and then we're traveling through space. We'll travel 1.5 million miles today. If that isn't a miracle, I don't know what is!

[Laughter]

Yet, I've never met anybody that at the end of the day knelt down and thanked God for keeping us in orbit. When was the last time we thanked him for that?

James: I get up every day thanking him for everything. There is a real joy in just getting up and recognizing all the reasons to thank him. Everywhere I look I behold his glory. That's not malarkey, that's true.

Betty: I think God does want us to become good noticers of his creation and the miracles that are just right in front of us, to be able to open our eyes to see, to be able to walk or to look outside and see his creation.

Mark: So I wanted to start the book there, before we even get into these seven miracles that Jesus did in the gospel of John, why don't we start with understanding

that everything is a miracle. But then I really felt like there just needs to be a rising tide of faith. Listen. I'm a simpleton. I believe if we do what they did in the Bible God is going to do what he did.

James: I believe that too!

Mark: And he's the god of miracles! Sometimes we ask him to do kind of what's at the outside of our human ability, that we could barely do, maybe do. I think God is honored when we believe him to do measurably more than all we can ask or imagine.

James: You weren't in the room long with me tonight before you heard me saying that's exactly what I pray. Did you get that?

Mark: Yes.

James: I'm believing him. I believing him for the impossible because there is nothing impossible with him. So I'm asking him. See, I don't believe the sky is the limit, I believe God is the limit. Is that right? Am I thinking right or am I just getting old and senile? What is it? Am I thinking the way you want me to think?

Mark: We're on the same page. We're on the same page. I fell in love with these miracles in John's gospel. They're just so amazing.

James: You developed them beautifully.

Mark: I don't think they're just facts of history. I think they're microcosms; they're pictures of what God wants to do in our lives today. So my goal was that by the time people are done reading the book, maybe -- just maybe -- they're believing God for the miracle that they need in their life. So that really was the heart behind the book.

James: Well, you really inspired me to just trust God and to believe him for the impossible because it is nothing to him.

And what do you hope that every single person will take from the book? You say, "I want them to believe in miracles." But how do you see that playing out in everyday life? What do you see that you desire happening? Just like when you look at your congregation, what are you wanting to happen with that person?

Because as I look at people right now I'm seeing things that I want. I look at these people; I want them to know how much God loves them, that he wants to talk to them. We talk about prayer, and I really believe that when we pray, the more we learn about prayer, the more we'll learn to listen because he is as anxious to talk to us as we can ever be to talk to him -- most of us just don't listen.

So I have these desires for people to see these things. What do you want them to walk away -- if they read this book, what do you hope happens to them as it translates to everyday life?

Mark: Well, I think the first thing I would say is that everybody wants a miracle but no one wants to be in a situation that necessitates one. But you can't have one without the other. So the invalid, he didn't want to be on a mat for 38 years. And the noble man, his son with that high fever, no parent wants to be in that situation. The man born blind, like those -- we don't want to be in those situations but you may be in those situations.

And I think I wrote the book to say sometimes that's God setting you up to do something that's absolutely miraculous in your life and I believe that.

James: And you believe the New Testament miracles, the same God then can do the same things now.

Mark: Absolutely! Jesus said, "You will see even greater things than this." So if it wasn't Jesus who said it, we would almost think it was heretical. But he was Jesus himself who said, "You will see even greater miracles than this." So I think if we humble ourselves before God and we posture ourselves in prayer, and we're in his Word, and we're in his presence, miracles happen. I do think it is important to say

though don't just seek the miracle, seek God. And if you seek God and if you follow Jesus long enough you're going to find yourself in the middle of some miracles.

James: Well, when you find him that in itself is a miracle. When you learn to rest in him that in itself is a miracle. He really is -- you title it grave robbery and you really end with resurrection, not of Lazarus but you've got the resurrection where Jesus robbed the grave.

Tell us what you want all of us to grasp in that because it is so significant. I see so many people held captive. You talked about the bondage, the way he was wrapped up and how he came out. I can almost see him coming out because they couldn't move him. He is wrapped up but he came out. God totally set him free. I really see a lot of people sitting in church, they're kind of like they've still got on their grave clothes, and he wants to set them free, he wants to rob them of the death and the bondage. At least I hear you saying that.

Mark: Probably, 100 pounds of grave clothes; that would be the typical kind of burial custom. So in a sense, sin is like wrapping ourselves in grave clothes. I would say that Jesus says, just like he said, "Lazarus, come out," I heard, "Mark, come out." He's calling each one of us out of that, that tomb of death and sin. So it is the kind of ultimate miracle; it's the last one where, come on, four days after a funeral -- I mean unbelievable!

And Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life."

What a moment when he says to Martha, "Do you believe this?"

That's the game changer because if you do believe that changes everything. And of course, that story then was the foreshadowing of his own resurrection. I just think James, that sometimes we relegate the celebration of the resurrection to one day a year.

Listen! It is something we celebrate every day in every way. He doesn't just resurrect dead bodies but he wants to resurrect relationships, resurrect dreams. You name it, God is in the resurrection business. So really, the title of the book just came from that

moment where he robs the grave -- he robs the grave! He is the grave robber and he calls us out of death and sin and into that new life we have in Christ.

Betty: I'm so grateful that James, he does a really good -- I hate to call it "a job" of this - - but he really does notice things and gives God credit for them, just at life or outdoors or anything, he is very, very sensitive to that. I think God wants us to be sensitive to his miracles that are all around us.

Mark: And if we are sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, it's amazing what the Lord can do. I think that's a wonderful, just kind of opportunity, to really challenge viewers because sometimes we want our miracle, we need our miracle, but I found that sometimes the quickest way to the miracle that you need is to realize that you're someone else's miracle. If you'll focus on just being that miracle for another person, then it's amazing how it comes back around and God blesses us.

James: With a little lad that brought them -- and this is one of them you talk about and you're so graphic the way you tell it -- but his two fish and his five loaves. What he had, he gave him. And you think that little boy ever imagined the miracle he was going to witness? You think his disciples, who felt so feeble and so empty-handed, who tell him, "This is what we have"; "With such as he had he presented to him." Such as we are if we present to him.

I do present myself every day and I certainly don't walk without having a stumble or missing the mark. And when I do, I always wonder sometimes, would others pick me up? But I always hear him saying, "I've got you. I'm picking you up."

But a lot of times we like to feel that in others who say, "I'm going to pick you up too and be a miracle for others."

I find myself every day asking God to show me how I can be what you said a while ago, a miracle. This whole ministry is a miracle for people. One of the things that I've said that resonates with people, if you want your prayers answered, seek to be an answer to someone else's prayer. The viewers of *LIFE Today* answer prayers all over

the world: The cries of women who need a child to have clean water, a hungry child to have food, people in trouble.

Right now we're dealing with sexual trafficking. We're getting so many precious women out of that trade of being held in bondage. Many of them we're dealing with right now, their little children are about to be taken and put into the same life they've spent theirs in. We're able to turn that around. So we become a miracle for people.

I feel like that's what you're saying. Every time we reach out and rob Satan of his intent we have robbed the grave because I'm telling you, he is so bent on holding us captive in bondage, defeated, and take the life out of every person. And Jesus robs the grave.

Mark: Well, and I, in the book, call them supernatural synchronicities, those moments where God...

James: You actually tell us what that word means in the book, too.

[Laughter]

Mark: I do! I just have this profound sense of destiny. I just believe the Bible, that God is ordering our footsteps. Every single day there are divine appointments that God is setting up and it is just our job to keep those appointments. You don't have to go halfway around the world either. They're usually... God puts them right in our path.

Of course, one of the miracles I really focus on that dimension. I think the joy of writing a book like this is then to begin to hear the stories of miracles that happen that really just continue to bring glory to the God who is the God of miracles.

James: You really are a gift and I hope you'll get the book because it's -- I just can't even describe it. You just call us into the presence of the Lord when you say you know God gave you a gift, you want to develop it. Would you just pray that Mark will continue to walk in the spirit and do what God is telling him to do? Would you say thanks for doing it? -- Thanks for being obedient? -- Thanks for blessing us?

[Applause]

The book is online. You can get it in the bookstores; it's there. I'll tell you what I'll do. If you will help set someone free from the grave right now, a living death, held in bondage to sexual trafficking, to predators, many of these taken as little children, we have relief workers and missionaries in place and you, our viewers over the years now have helped us build beautiful centers where can rescue children, rescue women, train them in a future occupation and it's love that does it.

I want you to look in to situations that are very, very real and say, "God, I want to be an answer to that need!"

And we can be because we can rescue, relieve and restore these who have been held captive, but we do it together. The missionaries and relief workers are there. They've planted their life in the midst of that pain. All we do is enable them to accomplish their mission.

Watch prayerfully. Please! Please do not turn away because you can be a part of a supernatural miracle right now in our day.

On the mission field

Announcer: For the wicked men and women working as modern day slave traders, neighborhoods like this are the perfect hunting grounds. Using deceit and threats of violence they prey on the innocent, the poor, and the most vulnerable. Human traffickers rob the hopes and dreams of their victims just to make a small profit.

Open captions:

>>My name is Pinky Das. I come from a poor family. But I had dreams of getting an education. But that didn't happen. A year ago, when my baby was six months old, there was a lady who claimed she could give me work. But I was tricked and sold to a brothel.

When I tried to leave they said, "We bought you for this amount."

When I couldn't pay them, they refused to release me.

Announcer: The emotional and physical abuse these women face every day prove to be an effective prison. Even though sometimes they aren't behind actual cell bars, the victims in a brothel are held captive nonetheless.

Open captions:

>> I thought of running away, but I always got caught. And I was threatened that my son would be sold to somebody else. Now I'm scared that my son will be taken away from me.

Announcer: *LIFE Outreach* and its mission partners know that God has not forgotten about the victims of human trafficking. Together, we can reach, rescue, and restore Pinky Das as well as the lives of thousands of other women around the world.

Open captions:

>> I want to still have hope that my dream will come true. If I get a chance, I'm going to learn things and I'm going to work for myself. And I want my son to have a better future.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Boy, I tell you what, I literally find myself feeling inadequate to effectively share the need in a way that you would just reach out and do what you've just heard. The precious women are concerned about their own children. They've been in bondage and misery, and now they're -- what's going to happen?

But we can change that. We can take those children, Betty, and we can actually put them in a safe situation. And you did see people we couldn't let you see their faces. We

have actually reached a place now in some of the centers where we've got hundreds of children. We could cut right now and you could see children in this incredible *LIFE Center*; it is beautiful! It is magnificent. You built it. Love built it. You'll see little children singing. We used to show you their faces and their smiles; now we have to show them from the back. Because when we show them now, we've been finding out that they'll target those kids and try to get those kids. And we can't show the missionaries.

And we do most of the footage by hidden cameras; not all of it, but a lot of it is. So you're actually seeing into the very pit of hell. Those mission workers, they do risk their lives.

You say, "Why would they do that?"

Because Jesus gave his life. I can't explain that love. I know when I said to them, "I will stay here." And there's not been a single mission place that Betty and I have been that when I said, "We'll stay."

They said, "Please don't stay."

It wasn't that they didn't care for us. They said, "Go back and get people to help us so we can stay, so we can just do this. We've been doing it."

You have made those hopes and dreams come alive for those women, and for us and the missionaries. So would you reach out today again and touch with love? Would you dial the number that's always there as a prayer line for you if you have a broken heart? Would you reach out today and say, "I'm going to rescue, I'm going to relieve, I've going to restore."

\$128 is the average gift it takes to rescue one person from sex trafficking, and literally begin to rebuild their lives. Would you please make that gift?

I'm praying that many of you would help us rescue ten; we ask for \$1280. I know for some that's a huge amount. For some of you, "You know what? I could even do more

than that." And I believe you will! I believe people that have been blessed love to bless.

But at whatever level you can help, please do it. Reach out and touch someone with love today. A \$64 gift doubled, somebody matches it with you, we've got another victim or child that we've been able to rescue.

So you can go to LifeToday.org. Would you do that? Many people are doing it this way and it is an instant gift. Use your bankcard like a check.

If you want to call, please do. If you get a busy, people may be calling because they need someone to pray with them. You be persistent. While others are being prayed for you can be an answer to their prayer. And you take your bankcard and you make the gift; if you write a check, call us and tell us what you're mailing.

We want to send you the beautiful praise music, *Songs of Freedom*. You'll love it! Nobody gives to help us to get a gift, I know that. We want to send you understanding of the times in the book, *Indivisible*: Restoring faith, family, and freedom before it is too late. And we can do that; so give us an opportunity to bless you.

We want to say thank you; the beautiful "Forest Chapel" by Thomas Kinkade, it will be a beautiful... a point of looking at the glory of God in a gifted man, beautiful scenery. Thank you so much for making the gift God put on your heart today. Thank you for calling or going online. Thank you for rescuing, restoring a broken life, a precious life.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Innocent children created to be happy, loved, and cared for are being abducted and sold at the hands of violent predators, their spirit and bodies broken under horrific emotional and physical abuse. Through *Mission: Rescue Life* you can reach out to save children vulnerable to sex traffickers. You can help rescue those already enslaved and you can restore their lives with hope for a future.

Your gift today of only \$128 will help rescue a child and change their destiny forever. With gifts of \$64 or \$32, we will combine your support with others to help rescue one more child from the shame and pain of sexual slavery.

With your gift of any amount we will send you the *Songs of Freedom* CD, a collection of ten uplifting worship songs that are sure to become a favorite for your quiet time, drive time, or personal worship.

In addition to the CD, you'll receive *Indivisible*, a powerful soul-stirring book by James Robison and Jay Richards.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1280 to help rescue ten children and you may request this beautifully framed canvas print of the "Forest Chapel" by the Painter of Light™, Thomas Kinkade.

Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

End of clip

In the studio

James: I mentioned earlier that I'm going to tell you what I'm going to do with this book today. You can get it online. But if you just help us with any gift and you'd like to have *The Grave Robber*, I promise you, it's an awesome read.

I'm given a lot of books to read. I don't read all of them. But when I start reading one I can't quit, mm-hmmn! You will enjoy it. It will bless you and it will broaden your boundaries of love for so many, and to believe God for miracles. *The Grave Robber* by Mark Batterson: How Jesus can make your impossible possible. We thank you when you help others and this will bless you.

Would you join with Betty and me thanking Mark Batterson for being such a blessing?

Mark, thank you for coming all the way down here to share with us. God bless you!

Thank all of you so much for watching *LIFE Today*. Tell your friends to watch! Go to STREAM.org -- STREAM.org. Check it out. Pass it on.

Announcer: Be sure to visit stream.org, a rich and lively source for breaking news, analysis, and entertainment! Stream.org